new masses

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ACTION IN MILAN

A first-hand report by
GUIDO GOLDSCHMIED

CAN THE THEATER BE SAVED?

by LEO SHULL

"I THOUGHT YOU OUGHT TO KNOW"

A US Marine writes
to James V. Forrestal

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Rev. White says... NM says...

DEAR EDITOR: In response to NM's requirement of $10,000 before Christmas, Mrs. White and I wish to say that we think we might manage $100 of it, if 99 other couples, individuals, clubs, groups and/or organizations would each make a like contribution.

Would this be worth your trying? It does seem as though "the 99" would be forthcoming with an equal offering. At any rate the indispensable publication *must not* miss an issue, to say nothing of ever ceasing its so valuable service to the coming better days, as well as to those of difficult approach to the happy outcome.

With cordial wishes and best hopes,

Fraternally yours,

ELIOT WHITE.

No doubt many of our readers know the name of Rev. Eliot White, formerly of Grace Episcopal Church, New York. Will there be at least ninety-nine to take up his challenge? Of course, each individual does not necessarily have to give $100. If a group of ten give $10 each, they would qualify for this contest in which everybody wins—because NEW MASSES will continue to live and fight.

It's one week to Christmas. Though the drive to save NM has picked up—$4,975 received to date—*we are still far short of the $10,000 we need by Christmas and the $15,000 required by January 15.*

It's your move now.

The Editors.

You say

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104 East 9th St., N. Y. 3, N. Y.

Enclosed please find $..... as my contribution to your drive for $15,000 by January 15. In addition I pledge to donate $..... by .....

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Action in Milan Guido Goldschmied 3
Gropper's Cartoon 5
Exit Theater? Leo Shull 6
Housewives Are Simply Wonderful Vivian Howard 9
I Thought You Ought to Know A US Marine . . 12
Austria: The Shadows Deepen Bruno Frei . . . 15
Portside Patter Bill Richards 16
Book Reviews: The James Family, by F. O. Matthiessen: Sidney Finkelstein; Red Wine First, by Nedra Tyre: Phillip Bonosky; China Awake, by Robert Payne: Ralph Izard 17
Theater Isidor Schneider 20
Music Sidney Finkelstein 22

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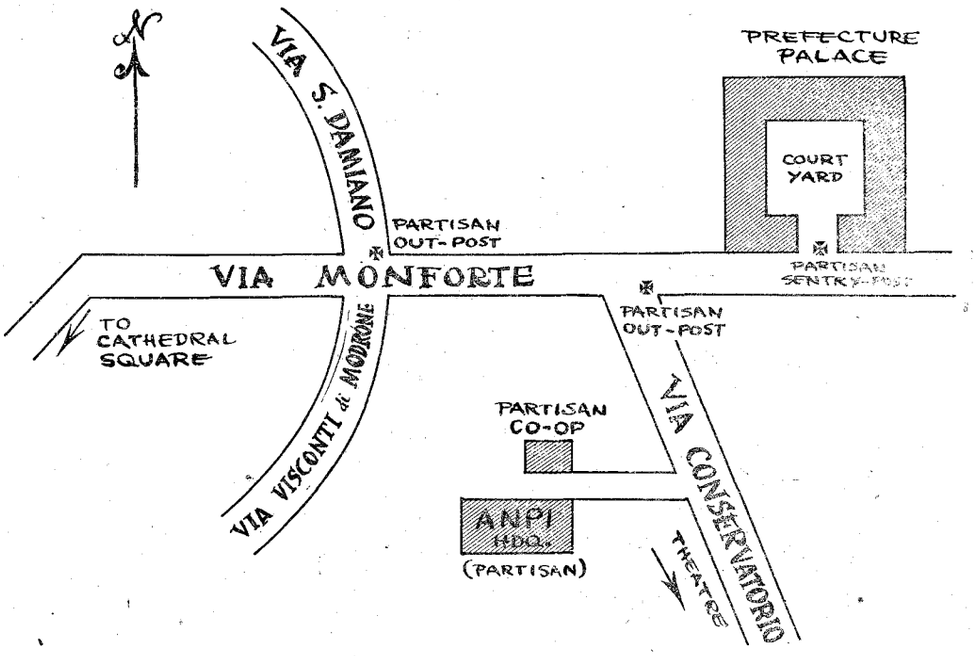

ACTION IN MILAN

The sirens screamed . . . general strike! The old Partisan songs were sung again—the workers marched again. And on that November night Rome and Washington were warned: *Don't go too far!*

By Guido Goldschmied

Milan, November 29.

THE open truck was taking the whole lot of us careening at a crazy pace through Milan's deserted streets in the icy rain. The atmosphere was reminiscent of the Ten Days (or what we know of them through the movies). I was thinking about the few sober lines of a statement which had apparently started it all:

. . . "*The Council of Ministers, upon the proposal of the Minister of the Interior, decrees the following transfers of prefects: Avocato Ettore Troilo from Milan to the disposal of the Ministry at his own request; Dottor Giovanni Ciotola from Turin to Milan.*"

This was enough to set the siren of the "Face" telephone factory near my room howling at 10:30 A.M., and soon we saw the workers streaming out of the gates. Another strike! Yes, but this one was different.

One by one all of Milan's 10,000 works—big, medium and small—slowed down and stopped altogether. Just after one P.M. the wireless was playing a jazz tune which was interrupted by the announcer: "Here is Gaetano Invernizzi, Secretary of the Labor Chamber of Milan, for an important announcement." In his level, unemotional, workingman's voice Invernizzi told Milan and the world what was happening.

The whole city had been roused by the decree from Rome, which—probably deliberately—was worded as if the prefect were being dismissed; in fact Troilo himself said that he first learned of the decision through the press. The mayor—attorney and playwright Antonio Greppi (a "Saragatian," but not all Saragatians are Saragats*)—had resigned in protest and so had 130-odd mayors of Milan province. All democratic organizations and parties had joined in the protest with the exception — as usual — of the Christian Democrats. A general strike had been called. An Emergency City Committee had been set up. Streetcars and busses had stopped running soon after the announcement and the huge city seemed to be asleep.

The prefect of Milan, Ettore Troilo, had been a Partisan in the resistance fight. Although he belongs to no political party and is neither a Communist nor a Socialist, he is one of those rare upper-class Italians (like ex-Premier Ferruccio Parri) who have some understanding of social problems

* Saragat is the leader of the Right-wing Socialists, who have left the Socialist Party to form one of their own.

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and are in sympathy with the common people. While in other cities when workers' delegations go to the Prefecture they feel they are facing representatives of the boss, in Milan it was different. Troilo was their friend and they knew that they would find understanding and whatever help could be given.

When a little while ago the large Caproni combine had no ready money to pay the workers for weeks on end—a partial consequence of the government's financial policy—it was Troilo who personally secured a loan from a private financier so that the workers and their families could eat. His personality and activity contributed to the fact that Milan is leading by far in the work of reconstruction and in civic spirit, that civil disturbances have been almost non-existent since the Liberation and all demonstrations are peaceful. It was known that this man was not and could not be *persona grata* to a government whose obvious aim is to dispel every trace of the bracing air of April 25th, 1945, and to erase that date from the calendar.

Although it is true, as we now know, that Troilo himself had asked to enter the diplomatic service and that he had been half-promised the chairmanship of the prospective Italian delegation to the UN, the mayor and City Council, worried by rumors of his impending transfer at a time when Milan faces another, perhaps grimmer winter than the last, had repeatedly asked Rome to refrain from moving the prefect. A few days before Mayor Greppi had sent a beseeching letter to Rome on the subject. The only answer of Home Minister Mario Scelba had been the communique quoted above, which had also worried Troilo himself, as he knows his Christian Democrats and their promises. If the aim was deliberately to provoke the people of Milan, this aim was successful, although the reaction was perhaps slightly different from what Rome expected.

SOON trucks with overalled workers started pouring from all parts of the city into Via Monforte, the narrow ancient street where the old government building is housed. They came to see their prefect and assure him of their solidarity. Then they decided to stay to see to it that no monkey-business was transacted.

At this point the Emergency City Committee was formed and it was decided to do things in a proper way. The Partisans were called in, or rather the old Partisan units were reformed. The ANPI (National Partisan Association) HQ some fifty yards away secured relays and you could see people—in the strangest and most varied attire yet somehow with a military bearing and perfect discipline—keeping order and directing traffic around the Prefecture and in the courtyard.

Things might have taken a turn for the worse when Minister Scelba in Rome ordered a Milan general to take over all powers and declare a state of siege. This general, however, was in Milan—not Rome—and had the common sense to see Troilo first. Troilo assured him that nobody was interfering with his work and that such a move might have extremely dangerous consequences. The general was convinced and did not take any hasty steps. Thus, in spite of Rome, bloodshed and civil rioting were averted.

When our truck got there, after passing two Partisan barbed-wire outposts, Corso Monforte was milling with people. More continued to come despite the freezing downpour. The picture seemed almost unreal: the rain, the uncertain lighting (due to low pressure), the trucks, the Partisans with raincaps or Balaclava helmets, the barbed-wire, the crowd—in which there were a good many women. Nearby the Partisan Theater was packed tight. The old Partisan songs were being sung again. Carletto, the Partisan who is porter, telephone operator and in fact everything useful at the ANPI, was another man now as he sat at the telephone exchange, his usual rather careless and bored air gone.

Around one A.M. Marazza, the envoy from Rome, came to the Prefecture. (He had arrived in Milan at 11 P.M. but had preferred the calmer air of the police station until then.) The courtyard of the Prefecture, mostly accustomed to comings and goings of leisurely, bespectacled bureaucrats, had an incredible appearance. On the noble, red-carpetted staircases people were squatting or sleeping. Partisan songs were being sung in hurricane choruses (intermingled with rather ribald love songs), probably the first time since April, 1945, that they had been sung in that setting.

There was plenty of hissing and booing of Marazza, and especially of "his boss, Scelba," De Gasperi and the rest, but never was there any danger of things getting out of hand. The platoon of *carabinieri* on hand were friendly and obviously relieved at the peaceful turn things were taking.

The Partisans and workers waited and waited, from time to time setting up a great shout: "Come on, Marazza, we are sick of waiting." At long last Giancarlo Pajetta, overcoat and hat on, came out and, speaking from a Breda truck in the courtyard, told his workers and Partisans of the outcome:

"COMMANDERS, commissars, Partisans and workers: We did not mean this to be one of those days that are worth as much as a hundred years. That day may still come—perhaps. But we did mean to show this government that you cannot trifle with Milan. We were not afraid of the Fascists, we were not afraid of the Germans; does Scelba think we are afraid of him?

"Unfortunately we cannot keep Troilo, as now he does not want to stay, and I do not blame him; but we insist that any prefect of Milan has to be appointed after consultation with the democratic representatives of the city. We do not know this Ciotola. He may be the best man or he may be the worst. All we know is that we cannot trust this government to choose for us.

"A delegation headed by our mayor will now go to Rome to present our point of view forcefully; Troilo will stay for the time being. Any new prefect will remember that Partisan songs have been sung here tonight. We will now leave this building as honorable soldiers, although our weapons may be non-existent or rusty—those weapons we conquered from the Germans or which the Allies threw us. The strike is over, for the time being. But remember, we must be ready: for the situation may arise again."

And at 6 A.M. the crowd filed out peacefully as the first streetcars in sixteen hours began to move. During those twenty-odd hours of general strike no incidents took place.

The events of Milan may seem tiny in comparison with what is brewing in France now, in comparison with what may happen in Italy itself tomorrow, but their meaning is clear for all to understand. It is a warning to those in Rome (and to their wire-pullers) not to go too far. For if they should go too far, the workers and Partisans of Milan—of all Northern Italy—have proved that they are ready. Quite ready.

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Exit Theater?

No, says the publisher of "Actor's Cues," and shows how to halt the trend toward blackout. Here are the facts and a program for action.

By LEO SHULL

IT IS time that progressives, looking with dismay upon our dwindling theater with its prohibitive prices, realized that if a better theater is to come it will have to be created. And they are the ones to do it. No one else can diagnose the trouble accurately and take the necessary action. Utopian desires, damning the critics and aimless analytical articles will never change our theater; past records prove that.

What are the facts?

New York is the cultural Athens of America today. No important stage exists outside of New York. But even in New York, 299 out of every 300 people are denied the opportunity to see stage shows. There are now less than thirty houses, seating 40,000 individuals per night, where once there were almost 100. These thirty theaters average forty weeks of operation a year even in lush times. Thus on an average night there are 40,000 seats available to 8,000,000 people. Considering that twenty-five percent of every audience is from out of town—during the summer it averages fifty percent—only one seat is available to every 300 people any night. And these seats cost three to six dollars.

Compare this with the film houses. There are 750 houses totaling 900,000 seats in the New York area. These give three and one-half shows per day, compared with one stage performance per day. Thus 3,000,000 seats are available for 8,000,000 people, or one seat for every three persons. The average movie seat costs 55¢. (In 1944 the national average was 33¢, in 1933 it was 23¢.) Thus 100,000,000 people go to the movies every week in this country. (Figures by *Film Daily*.) Every film has about 280 prints circulated, while only five shows a season may have a duplicate going out of New York.

Last season eighty plays were produced. Of these only fifteen ran more than fifty performances. The rest played to about 50,000 people, mostly a repeat crowd of professional theatergoers. In other words, 7,750,000 of the 8,000,000 New Yorkers never got a chance to see most of the plays produced.

This is not the whole story. Out of 6,000 scripts painfully created and copyrighted in Washington, only twenty living playwrights received royalties beyond a month. And of an estimated 3,000 would-be producers, only 300 announced new productions last year and only some sixty actually produced. Each of the 300 had an office, a phone and a secretary. Yet only a dozen shows last season paid back their investment costs.

What about the actors? Of 6,000 members of Actors Equity, about 1,000 got contracts, but only 600 opened in shows in New York and a large proportion of them worked for only four weeks' pay at the minimum salary of $60 per week. This was during the greatest boom season the theater has seen.

For every member of Actors Equity there are six actors who can't even get into a show and therefore are not even union members.

TWENTY years ago there were ninety-seven theaters in New York, showing more than 200 plays a year. Now there are only twenty-five theaters operating in the winter and fifteen during the summer. The banks have curtailed theater building; no new theaters have been built for the past twenty years.

The theaters today are operated by two monopolies—the Shuberts and the City Investing Company. Each charges rents based on "gross receipts"; there is no flat rent. They impose "stop limits," which means that if a show falls below a certain gross—usually $10,000 a week—out it must go, even though it makes a profit for the producer. The Shuberts get thirty-five percent of the gross. This makes it imperative that tickets be priced about $3 for the orchestra; tickets for hits are $4, and often $4.80. It is not labor costs which make tickets high—labor costs average only 50¢ per seat. It is the rent, primarily. The producer is the victim and must pass his victimization on to the public, although he is not without blame either; he is a speculator trying to fleece the transients as quickly as possible.

Today it costs $50,000 to produce a show that cost only $25,000 or less in 1941. Shows in 1941 were produced for $15,000 too, but theaters were for rent at $3,000 per week and there were no "stop limits." Under the circumstances what sensible person wants to invest in new ideas, to experiment in new trends of thinking? What producer can raise money for an unknown author, director or actors? The backers want a reasonable assurance they will get their money back: they want "formula shows," revivals of previous money-making plays, with stars to "pull 'em in at the box office."

What is the alternative? If rents and other speculative costs were reduced, could shows be produced today selling tickets for 50¢ to $1? Yes. Proof of this lies in the records of the Federal Theater Project, which at its peak in 1936 employed 10,000 actors and gave performances in forty states. Thirty million people went to these plays.

Even today one producer proves it: Jules J. Leventhal, who operates the "Subway Circuit," mostly in the Bronx and Brooklyn. He produces shows in the worst season of the year—the summer—and packs 1,500-seat to 2,000-seat theaters with performances which scale 60¢ to $1.50 (matinees 43¢ to 99¢). He uses movie houses which are ordinarily closed in the summer, gets them at cheaper rents, exhibits old plays or plays which have just been "finished" on Broadway, and his theaters are full. Last summer he showed *Joan of Lorraine, Dream Girl, Anna Lucasta.*

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The theatrical unions, scene designers and set builders would eagerly cooperate to bring prices down if the theaters operated on an annual full-capacity basis instead of the one-shot, three-week runs that prevail for Broadway plays. All the unions already make special deals with Leventhal's circuit during the summer. But Leventhal has to operate in theaters which are not owned by the Shuberts. When he produces a play on Broadway, as he often does, he has to charge the usual $4.80 in the orchestra, $6 for musicals.

WHAT about the theater in other countries? The following information is based on recent interviews with workers in theaters overseas:

The Swiss theater, which works on a repertory system, is subsidized by the government. The actors are hired for a full year, receive four weeks' paid vacation and are entitled to a substantial pension when they retire. Rehearsals go on for a new play while old ones are still being performed. Production costs are lower than for some of the larger American university shows; audiences therefore benefit by low admission prices. There are even special performances for the poor, for children, for farmers in outlying districts who are brought in by bus. Various social, industrial and commercial organizations subscribe to annual season tickets for their members and employes. Oddly enough the government doesn't have to give much money to the theaters at the end of the season. The big towns all make a profit and help pay the deficits of the small towns.

Almost all the conditions which prevail in Switzerland are true of the Czech subsidized theater. Anne Gerlette, the wife of George Voskovec (of the team of Voskovec and Verich) writes: "The actor here is closer to heaven and security than ever in his career because we have a subsidized theater. When a theater closes down it does not throw the actor out of a job. The actor works on a year-to-year basis rather than a show-to-show basis." Tickets too are cheap and there are many repertory theaters.

In England actors average about forty-five weeks a year. For an audition a director is lucky to have forty people apply. London alone has fifty theaters on the West End (the English Broadway), and forty smaller theaters nearby, besides numerous touring companies. Says our informant, "The reason for the general prosperity of the theater in England is summed up in one word: subsidization. The Arts Council of Great Britain, a government office, is granted several million pounds a year to further the spread of culture. Symphonies, paintings, opera, ballet and worthwhile plays come under the classification of culture. The Arts Council is rather broadminded as to what constitutes good theater; a progressive play like *All My Sons* would readily be accepted."

The Arts Council acts as a sort of insurance for companies that wish to produce worthwhile plays which might not pay off at the box office, or companies that tour towns so small it would be impossible to make money. Admission is low; the actors receive their salaries plus a share in the profits.

Russia has 3,000 theaters; almost all are repertory. They have an eleven-month season. Theater workers get four weeks' vacation with pay. If an actor is not used in a production he still gets his salary, but he works in films or radio. Thus the arts are very much alive, for the actors can change their mediums. One play can run in 500 or more theaters simultaneously and each theater pays the author royalties. Actors and playwrights are highly regarded and highly paid. Prices of seats are low and range from one ruble (approximately 25¢) to ten rubles.

There are fifty-six theaters in Moscow, including small ones which attract large audiences because they are young, semi-professional and very inventive. The smaller theaters are uninhibited by conventions and often present plays in a very unorthodox way. Moscow has theatrical festivals every year and theater groups from other Soviet republics come to display their art.

WHAT is the solution for the American theater? The Broadway theater is constantly shrinking. All the ingenuity of devoted, hard-working theater artists and well-wishers has not halted the decay, nor will it as long as the theater is run as a commercial, speculative, soak-the-sucker racket.

Organized efforts, all of them professional and high-intentioned, have been made to halt the trend. There were the Theater Union, the Group Theater, the Theater Guild, and lately the Experimental Theater (Equity) and Theater Inc. They have not stemmed the tide. And in fact any theater that has to charge three to six dollars for a show is doomed to failure. The only really successful venture was the Federal Theater, which marked a true cultural renaissance. If it could have continued it would have been commercially successful as well. It brought theater to the people at 25¢. It discovered a whole new audience—the American people.

Today there are still a few off-Broadway groups that work heroically to do something about this situation. Stage for Action produces excellent shows at low admission prices, but this group is forced to present its offerings away from Broadway, in halls and for short runs, with non-professional equipment. Stage for Action is now trying to lease its own small theater away from Broadway to run shows in conjunction with other art groups and membership organizations.

Recently a group of eight playwrights formed the Associated Playwrights' Company and produced their plays in the small theater of the Henry Street Settlement. Theodore Ward's *Our Lan'* came to the critics' attention and to Broadway via this route. Little groups like this help to bring ideas to the stage. There are also individual producers like Herman Shumlin, Kermit Bloomgarden and Lee Sabinson who are willing to project fresh ideas.

Then there is the American National Theater and Academy (ANTA), a recently-emerged organization which aims to revitalize the theater. ANTA succeeded in getting

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five new plays tested before Broadway audiences in a small 300-seat theater. These plays were shown at $3 per seat to a subscription audience of stage folk, producers and backers. It was an effort to improve the quality of the Broadway fare, but it didn't quite succeed. ANTA is now trying to raise $5,000,000 to underwrite little theaters throughout the country. It has become the clearing house for theater problems and is getting appeals for help from all over the country. However, as a semi-private organization, set up something like the Red Cross, its possibilities are limited and it is not the answer to the question of subsidized theater.

Then there are the thousands of "tributary" theaters, meaning the little theaters and community playhouses which dot our country. They imitate the Broadway theater, and not only are they not "tributary" (as a lake is tributary to an ocean) but they take all the cliches and commercialism from Broadway and repeat them endlessly throughout the country. "Kiss and Tell" becomes the drama standard of every little town and village, as inexorably as a New York soap opera blares its way from Radio City.

College theaters, too, have shown little desire or ability to change the folkways of our Times Square drama mentors.

THE only solution for the American theater is some form of subsidy. In view of the present government in Washington, it looks as if action will have to begin on the state level.

Although many people are unaware of it, America has one subsidized theater. The Barter Theater in Virginia has been operating since April, 1946, on a state subsidy of $10,000 a year. It is an out-and-out grant, with no strings attached. This unique theater acquired its name because it accepted food from neighboring farmers in lieu of money during the depression. Ninety percent of its revenue in the early years consisted of ham, corn and potatoes.

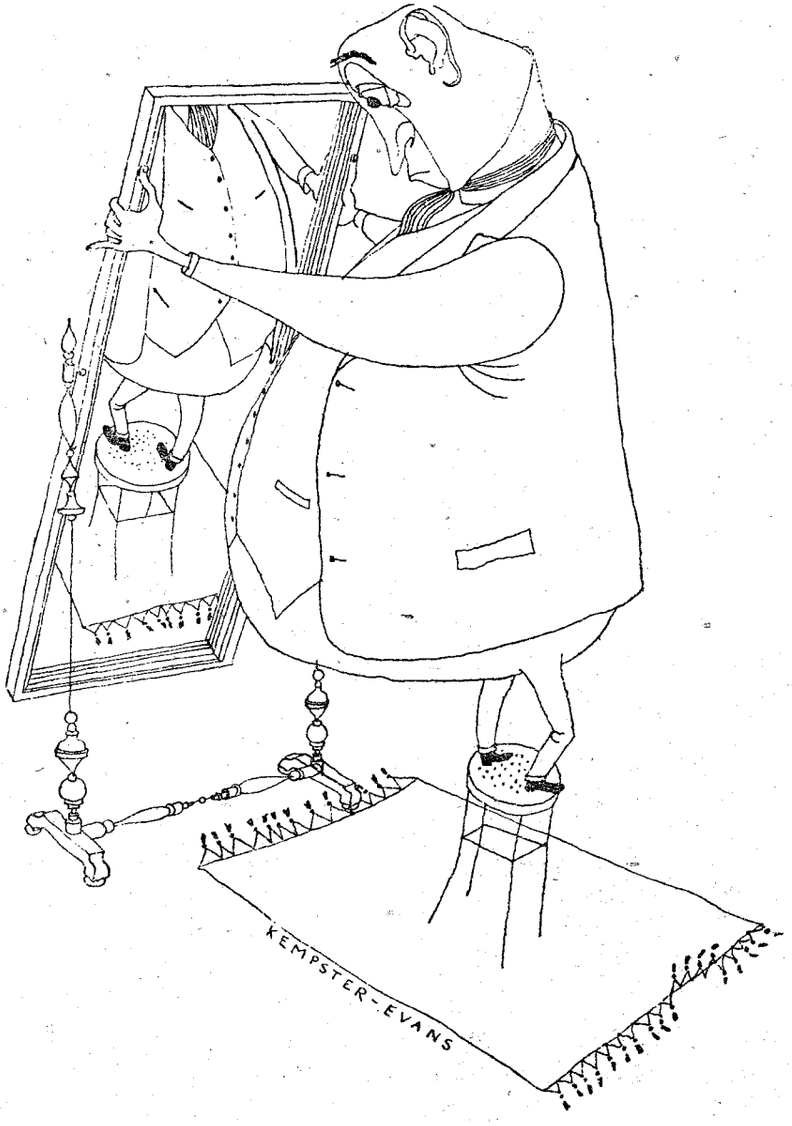
Now that Virginia has blazed the trail, it may be easier to achieve state subsidies. A national lobby would take years to develop, while state groups (each state has dozens of little theaters) already exist ready for action. Such practical matters as travel and the difficulty in reaching Washington representatives make it more feasible to organize and lobby on the state level.

In cities like New York, where large revenue comes into the budget via entertainment taxes, it should not be difficult to achieve a city subsidy. There are at least six City Councilmen of the twenty-two who are already in favor of such a subsidy. The large memberships in the entertainment unions could join with the sympathetic CIO, the ALP and other progressive organizations on this issue to great effect. The people would benefit by the lower prices; theater workers would have yearly contracts; the city would benefit through enhanced cultural life, plus increased revenue from admission taxes.

Subsidized theater has already proved itself. The theater workers are available to push such legislation: in New York City there are 60,000 members of theatrical unions. The progressive organizations are more than willing to sponsor and work for its enactment. The public is bound to be happy with the fruits, for it has been up in arms at the victimization now practiced.

This is the proper time to set up an over-all program to counteract the effects of our shrinking theater. The procedure should be to call a conference, adopt a program, set up action committees, mobilize widespread support, operate a paid year-round lobby. If the ten entertainment unions each contributed $100 a week to such a people's lobby we could have subsidized theater within two years.

NEW MASSES *invites comment on Mr. Shull's discussion of this important subject.*



From "Seven," an English quarterly.

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Housewives Are Simply Wonderful

Resourceful, resplendent—never underestimate the power of the heroines in the women's magazines.

By VIVIAN HOWARD

WE HOUSEWIVES are being told all the time how wonderful we are. Makes us feel better while we're washing the diapers. As a matter of fact we can boast of a whole body of cultural endeavor built around us, about us and for us: Drama ("When a Girl Marries"), Music (*Super Suds, Super Suds, Super Dooper Super Suds—ah—uds*), Art (Rheingold Beer's Girl of the Year in eight-color ads) and Literature (women's magazines' fiction heroines).

One of my favorite heroines in recent women's magazine fiction is Lucia Holley, a tall woman, very young-looking for her thirty-eight years, with a dark serious face and beautiful dark eyes. Lucia inhabits the complete-in-one-issue novel entitled "The Blank Wall" in the October *Ladies' Home Journal*, and like all L. H. J. heroines, she has the "resourcefulness of the mother, the domestic woman, accustomed to emergencies." Move over, men!

Lucia has a husband at war, and she has to cope with all kinds of horrendous problems such as rationing, fresh delivery boys, household cares along Lond Island Sound, a love-struck daughter, an adolescent son and a retired old father. But her *real* troubles begin when she goes down to the boathouse one morning for a swim before breakfast and finds that papa has bumped off daughter's obnoxious boy friend, whose body lies draped over the family motorboat.

Lucia is stunned, but only for a moment. Leave us not underestimate the resourcefulness of an L. H. J. housewife!

She thinks fast. "They'll find out why Ted [the corpse] came here, and Bee [the daughter] will be dragged into it. It will be so horrible. . . . Father will have to go to court. He'll be so shocked, so humiliated. . . ."

Whereupon the intrepid lady bundles the corpse into the motorboat and takes it off to an island out in the Sound. She puts her blue bandana over the poor boy's face because it is all so horrible, and then she returns home to breakfast.

Later in the morning, Lucia goes marketing. Since she can't use the car on account of gas rationing, she phones for a taxi. She changes into a costume suitable for the village: a blue and white checked gingham dress, a blue belt, blue sandals and a wide black straw hat.

It is a morning of frustration, the author remarks. Gad, what a life, to dispose of a body so efficiently before breakfast and then to be thwarted by a marketing list! No margarine, no sugar, no soap flakes. And after being so careful to match dress, belt and sandals—all so beautifully blue.

You think Lucia's troubles are over? No, there are more and more emergencies, including the suspicious policeman, Lt. Levy, an amorous Irish blackmailer, another corpse and gifts of succulent black-market meat which arrive parcel post.

For her meeting with the blackmailer, Lucia picks out a special hat—"a sort of sailor with an edging of white eyelet embroidery on the brim." At a later rendezvous, she prefers a black suit, little black hat with a veil, white blouse and white gloves. She is never at a loss for a chic costume to suit any occasion. On the day of the second murder, she wears a simple red-and-white checked gingham dress, stiffly starched.

It is only during her last poignant meeting with the Irish gangster, now reformed, that Lucia disappointed me badly. She is awakened at 2 A.M. on a rainy night by her faithful cook, Sibyl, who tells her to "come at once—he's here." Lucia sits on a chair while Sibyl puts on her shoes and stockings. There is absolutely no description of her dress, not an inkling of the color, material, style or degree of starchiness. But I am sure that in spite of the lateness of the hour and the urgency of the situation, Lucia's costume is exactly appropriate. The gangster, we are informed, was "immaculately neat in his dark suit and dark tie, with his arm in a black sling."

Needless to say, Lucia, through sheer feminine charm and housewifely efficiency, solves all her difficulties, both lethal and romantic, and another American home is saved. I never doubted but that she could do it.

TO MATCH this magnificent American wife and mother, the November *Woman's Home Companion* offers us Rusty Farr ("The Lucky Ones" by I. A. R. Wylie).

Rusty's husband is a student veteran, and the two of them live in Vet Village on the edge of an unnamed campus—a background which is right now dearly beloved by the fiction editors of all the women's mags.

Rusty is a big, energetic, vivacious, smart and capable gal, a former WAC cook. Right away she gets an early morning job making pies at a restaurant. This means that she has to leave the breakfast coffee in a thermos for her war-hero husband, who is suffering from acute battle fatigue and can't stand the taste of thermos coffee. So husband starts eating breakfast next door with Dora, a blond, fragile type.

Rusty is nothing more or less than a younger edition of Lucia. How that girl gets things done! She organizes a clubhouse for the vets, nurses the entire campus, including the doctor, through a flu epidemic and starts a successful catering business.

Of course it never occurs to her to teach that lug of a husband how to make his own coffee. The men who

COMING SOON IN NM

1948 will mark one hundred years since the first Women's Rights Convention initiated the struggle for sex equality in America. In two timely, challenging articles Betty Millard discusses some aspects of this battle today. It's "Woman Against Myth"—watch for Round One in an early issue!

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clutter up the lives of our heroines are handsome but extraordinarily helpless, nay feeble-minded. Every housewife knows that men could be dispensed with entirely if it weren't that they pay the rent and are—well, men.

So Rusty's husband sees spots before his eyes when he tries to study and finally runs away with the blond. What does Rusty do? "You can't go after him," her friend, the doctor, tells her. "You've got to go to Reno like a self-respecting woman."

But of course the doctor, being a mere man, doesn't know the mettle of a *Woman's Home Companion* heroine. Rusty sets out in the doc's car, overtakes the runaway couple and drags them into a diner.

"What we all need," she says, "is a cup of good hot coffee!"

The saga of Rusty ends, as it inevitably must, with Rusty and her chastened husband marching hand in hand out of the diner, while the blond sits crying, not knowing what hit her. She never stood a chance, not against a girl who could cook.

That same *Woman's Home Companion* is graced by another heroine who differs from Rusty and Lucia only in that throughout the story she is nameless. She is, in fact, a wrong telephone number that her hero, Elliott, gets when calling his girl, Peggy. Right at the beginning I knew that Nameless would get her man, because the first time he calls she is washing sweaters. The second time she is baking an apple pie. Peggy, the heartless and frivolous, takes naps and lolls around in the sun and undoubtedly has never read a recipe in her life.

But Elliott, being a man and therefore a jerk, doesn't realize who he's in love with. He hasn't even got the intelligence to find out who Nameless is. She, of course, has already discovered *his* name, knows what he looks like and is ready to lead the poor guy to the altar before he lays eyes on her.

ALONGSIDE of Lucia, Rusty and Nameless in this splendid gallery of housewives is Christina Orth ("These My Sins," October *McCall's*). Christina starts off by being a career woman, and for this she must suffer. She runs away with a boy at sixteen, ostensibly to get married. However, Christina is an artistic type and gets interested in drawing pictures of her lover, so they never do find time to have the ceremony performed. The boy friend deserts her, and Christina has a baby and becomes a famous dress designer. When her daughter is sixteen, Christina digs up the boy friend again, marries him, and at long last makes a housewife out of herself.

I'm real proud of these fellow housewives of mine, and a little humble before them too. Although I read my *Ladies' Home Journal* from Page 1 to Page 296 every month, cook their recipes, imitate the full-color pictures when setting my dinner table and shampoo my hair according to the prescribed steps one, two and three, I would not know what to do if my husband ran away with a blond or if I discovered a corpse in my motorboat, provided I had a motorboat. I am afraid I would not even be able to find a sitter for my illegitimate baby while I became a famous dress designer. And if a pleasant baritone voice called me on the phone by mistake, I am reasonably certain that I would not be washing sweaters. Of course it is possible to keep soap flakes and a pan of luke warm (not hot) water ready for just such an eventuality.

That's why I'm glad that I have found these real answers to real problems right alongside of those splendiferous ads for washing machines, canned soups, linoleum, silverware and refrigerators.

Receipt from Athens

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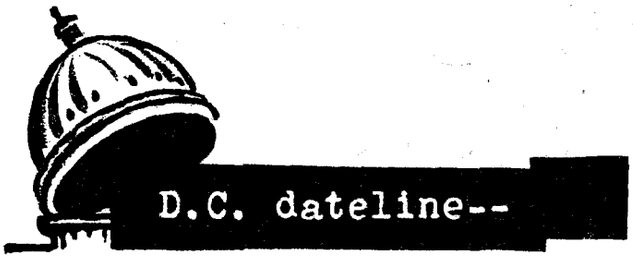

. . . And the Band Played On

Washington.

HAVE you ever seen a minuet performed by dancers wearing ski boots? Such an ungainly yet delicate performance would roughly correspond to what has been going on here for the past week. Inflation furnishes the music, a music whose off-beat discords have now penetrated even the sound-proofed halls of Congress. The first unwilling steps to this music were taken by Mr. Truman when he presented his message to the special session of Congress. The first part of that message, the part received so rapturously by Congress, called for extension of the Truman Doctrine to other "democracies" than those currently seated on the necks of their people in Greece and Turkey. It was the second segment, calling for price control as well, that displeased the Congress, even as sweetened by the President with a corollary call for wage control.

Since then, various administration officials have testified before various Congressional committees on this inflation program. Commerce Secretary Harriman danced with mincing steps all about the problem, without ever mentioning price control. There should be some, ah . . . allocation of materials, yes. . . . Perhaps rationing of scarce commodities such as steel. Perhaps a voluntary allocation program. Yes. . . . Was the Secretary suggesting abrogation of the anti-trust laws? Well, no, but. . . . Well, there might be a way to get around those, special exemptions might be arranged. But that wasn't enough. Majority Republicans kept asking Harriman and others why they didn't bring in prepared legislation, something they could form a judgment on.

But no administration figure produced such a program. So in the face of $1 butter, and with even oleo prices being jacked up, the Republicans took two steps backward, and introduced their own program. This turned out to be the same dance routine that the Democrats had performed—only the GOP put it into legislative form. And minus price controls, of course.

Long ago the administration had insinuated that it wanted control of exports extended beyond the date on which they now expire (Feb. 29, 1948). The GOP bowed low, and said in print that it wanted the same thing. After all, neither could publicly yield to the other on the virulence of its anti-communism, and export controls were part and parcel of that sentiment, since they could be used against the Soviet Union and the new East European democracies.

Both Democrats and Republicans pointed toes in the next step of the figure. Both wanted extension of transportation controls—but the Republicans rushed it into legislative form first. Both wanted higher gold reserves; they bowed to one another. Then the GOP turned to bow to Harriman: anti-trust exemptions, of course. So glad you mentioned it first.

It was at this point, with the practically surreptitious introduction of the Wolcott bill in the Banking and Currency Committee of the Senate, that Mr. Truman went into a *pas seul*. Late on the afternoon of the day the Wolcott bill became public news, the President announced a press conference for the next morning. Tanned, and looking like the week's man of distinction in his double-breasted gray flannel, Mr. Truman received the press with his customary synthetic elan. After announcing a few routine administrative matters that furnished the occasion for the conference, the President announced that his anti-inflation program, the whole program and nothing but the program, would be submitted to Congress within a few days. Yes, it would include price and wage control.

"But," a reporter asked, delighted at the opportunity, "didn't the President say back in October that such things were 'the methods of a police state'?"

No, said the President calmly, they were only the methods of a police state when applied by a dictator. . . .

So the minuet goes on. The day after the President's press conference, the astute GOP tacticians on the Senate Appropriations Committee (Bridges of New Hampshire, Ferguson of Michigan and Saltonstall of Massachusetts) haled before them the administration's Edwin W. Pauley. Pauley, formerly a Big Time Operator in the commodity markets, is now special assistant to Army Secretary Royall, in charge of revamping the Army's procurement service and plans for industrial mobilization.

In summoning this millionaire speculator the Republicans hoisted the Democrats by their own petard, since Mr. Truman has been lavish in attributing to speculation in commodities the main blame for high prices: here was one of the biggest, right inside the administration. They also improved on Truman's job of deflecting the blame for high prices from those to whom it belongs, the monopolists of big business.

Such a clodhopper's minuet would be impossible were not the Republican and Democratic parties so basically identical in their interests. What is required to clarify the really fundamental issues—peace and inflation—is a third, or rather, as Frank Kingdon puts it, a second party.

THIS department was told this week, on the best authority, that Henry Wallace will speak out for such a party before the year is done. And if this authority were not sufficient, there are other indications: increasing speculation by the various columnists that Wallace will take such action, the awakening consciousness of labor's most inert figureheads that political action is necessary for labor's own protection. One columnist (Frank C. Waldrop, of the Washington *Times-Herald*) has publicly announced that Attorney General Clark is only awaiting Wallace's announcement to put the Progressive Citizens of America, which would presumably be one of the mainstays of the new party, on his list of subversive organizations.

Wallace is feared because of the following he has attracted. And not only by the Democrats, but by the Republicans as well, however much they may gloat publicly that his candidacy would kill Truman's chances. For the Republicans know that any possibility of hiding the real issues at stake in our country will vanish with the emergence of the new party.

A. L. J.

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I THOUGHT YOU OUGHT TO KNOW

An Open Letter to James V. Forrestal, Secretary of Defense, from a US Marine

Seattle.

DEAR MR. FORRESTAL: I guess you will be surprised to get a letter from someone who is only a private first class. But I have something on my mind, and it is bothering me so much I can't sleep. This may sound morbid to you, Mr. Forrestal, since I am only twenty-one. But you see last week my C.O. asked me to attend a Russian language class they are starting at the Puget Sound Navy Yard.

They had these language schools during the war, as you know, Mr. Forrestal, but they were *Japanese* language schools, and they were discontinued after V-J day.

We (the fellows in my outfit) first heard about the schools one night in the slop chute. One of the Joes who helps the first louey in the office said it had just come over the Almar that language schools were to be started at key points. (The Almar, Mr. Forrestal, is the speed letter reporting changes in general orders from Washington.) The next day the C.O. suggested I sign up for the course, since it is known around the base I get along well with people of other nationalities and have no difficulty picking up their talk. Now I have no objections to learning the Russian or any other language at your, or rather the taxpayers', expense. But the invitation to get this free schooling, just at this time when the headlines are screaming about our State Department's "get tough with Russia" policy, is pretty disquieting to someone like me who has already been in one war.

I don't want to bore you, Mr. Forrestal, but I think you should know something about my life, not because it's mine but because it's typical of a whole generation—let's call them the War Kids.

Seven years ago, in December, 1941, I was fourteen, living with my parents and going to high school in ———, a town where Mr. Kaiser later built a lot of ships for the Maritime Commission. Out of our sophomore class, Mr. Forrestal, more than half of us quit school to work in the yards. They were glad to get us, although most of us were too young to get work permits through the regular channels.

My best friend was killed with the Fifth Marines on Okinawa, so when I was seventeen I enlisted in the corps, too. I got out of boot camp before the war ended, but it isn't that part I'm griping about, Mr. Forrestal. A lot of other guys were in the war a lot longer than I was.

It was when I went to the recruiting station to re-enlist that I got my first real shock. (I guess you know there were thousands of us who re-enlisted, not to see the world, Mr. Forrestal, but because there were no jobs for us when we got home, and a young fellow has to eat.) Well, there I was sitting in the recruiting office, waiting to take the oath again, and one of the rookies asked the sergeant if there'd be any chance for machine-gun practice in boot camp.

"You'll get plenty of that," the sergeant said, "you kids are going to China to fight Chinese Communists."

(I've made it clear, haven't I, Mr. Forrestal, that this incident happened after V-J day, that it's the "postwar" world I'm talking about now?)

As it turned out I was sent to the Philippines instead of to China. We were put to guarding supplies at a supply base on ———. We "guarded" them from our allies, former Filipino guerrillas, who could have used some of the left-over jeeps, for instance, to reestablish agriculture on that island.

I guess you've never been in the Philippines, Mr. Forrestal, and maybe you don't know that the water buffalo we used to see pictured in the school geographies have been killed and eaten for food. So there were the Filipinos out in the fields using their bare hands for ploughs. And there were the US Marines with those jeeps. Know what we did with the jeeps, Mr. Forrestal? We loaded them on a ship and took them to Guam and there we ran them over a cliff into the Pacific Ocean. The Marines used to wonder why, if they were going to "dunk" the jeeps, they didn't do it right there on ——— and save all that time and cargo space, but of course it was against the regulations.

THIS is my first letter to you and I don't want to make it too long, and pretty soon taps will blow for lights out, so there isn't time to tell you all I saw on ———. But I do want you to know about the medical supply situation.

As you've no doubt heard, the war lasted a lot longer for the Filipino people than it did for us. Many of them had been forced to live as best they could in the hills during the occupation, and by the time my outfit got to ——— lots of the islanders were so weak and ridden with disease they could hardly walk around. They had dysentery and dengue fever and beriberi and other diseases I can't recall the names of now; and some of them had lost their arms and legs in the fighting. The warehouse I guarded was full of medicine and vitamin capsules and absorbent cotton, but it was against regulations to give any medical supplies to the "natives," and when they organized raiding parties against the warehouse at night we had orders to shoot them.

One of my buddies, who was the son of a stateside preacher, ran away into the hills at the other end of the island to live with the Filipino people. He was a deserter and we spent three months looking for him. We brought him back on a stretcher. He was emaciated and his body was covered with sores. But he could still pray. He prayed for us and for General Marshall, never once for himself. But God was good to him anyway. He died before he could be courtmartialed.

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I want to tell you about something else that happened, when I was on liberty in ———. They had a kind of quota system in this port which the Filipino stevedores could not get the straight of—and neither could I. But anyway while I was there a ship loaded with rice came into the harbor. Though it was mouldy, to the hungry it was manna from heaven. But the ship was not allowed to discharge this rice because the port of ——— already had its "quota," and the items which seemed to have priority were bottled beverages, including beer, and cosmetics. On another occasion when I was stationed on ———, 8,000 pounds of bubble-gum came in by air express.

During my tour of duty on ———, I was often detailed to go through the native village confiscating the pitiful bits of cooking utensils and other items the natives had managed to pilfer from our stores. (The "village," Mr. Forrestal, had grown up about a mile from the base, and most of the women, some of whom had attended the university in Manila before the war, served as prostitutes for our troops. In this way they were able to keep entire families from starvation.) The houses in those parts are built up on stakes, and some of us used to help the Filipinos hide the cooking pots and the atabrine they had stolen from us under the houses until the detail had passed.

I was on ——— quite a while. It took a long time to transfer the stores at the supply base to vessels for transshipment stateside and to Guam. Some of it didn't get to Guam — it was dunked in the Pacific within sight of Filipinos watching from the shore. We got awfully tired of staying on ———. It was common knowledge in some outfits that the best way to go stateside was "to shoot a native." They didn't courtmartial you, Mr. Forrestal—they simply sent you back to God's country to finish out your tour of duty.

That wasn't how I got back here, though. I was drunk on sentry duty one night and I tripped over my bayonet, and the wound wouldn't heal in that climate. I was in various hospitals in various places. When I finally got out of US Naval No. 10, I was sent to a reassignment center in San Diego and then to my present station on the Sound.

I won't tell you where I'm based. There are a lot of bases on the Sound now, and they're all alike—Indian Island, Bangor, Keyport, NAD, Sand Point, Pier 91. Take your pick, Mr. Forrestal. If you are ever out here on an inspection trip, almost any young Marine you meet marching up and down outside a naval installation might be me.

I WANT to tell you about a forty-eight-hour liberty I had recently in Seattle, and then I really will wind up this letter. First, I ran into an old school chum, a swabie on leave from duty in the Aleutians. I told him about the Russian language schools and he told me about the new developments on Kodiak Island. Millions of dollars of the taxpayers' money are being spent on gun emplacements and air bases in Alaska, but I guess you know more about that than I do, Mr. Forrestal.

My buddy and I got pretty tight in a Seattle bar, and we decided now was a good time to draw up our last wills and testaments. Maybe you are wondering what two young fellows like us, twenty-one and twenty-two respectively, who had been engaged in war work (never a very lucrative profession, at least at our level), for seven or eight years, could possibly have to bequeath posterity.

But everyone has something he values. Take me, Mr. Forrestal. There is my last high school report card—just an ordinary fourth termer's card. No "A's" and only one "B" (in English), but important to me because it was my last one. Then my overseas stripes—of course they are still on my tunic—and my medals. My Good Conduct Medal and my Purple Heart (remember I said I got out of boot camp before the war was over?). Oh, yes, and a picture I had taken on leave in one of those put-your-money-in-the-slot places they have for servicemen. I want my girl to have that. You know —"memory of the guy who might have been the father of your kids" if the war bloc in Washington hadn't decided to save Arabia for Standard Oil.

I know I promised to end this letter, Mr. Forrestal, and I know I'm keeping the other guys awake in my hut. But there's one more thing you ought to know. About a conversation in my outfit when I got back from the Seattle leave.

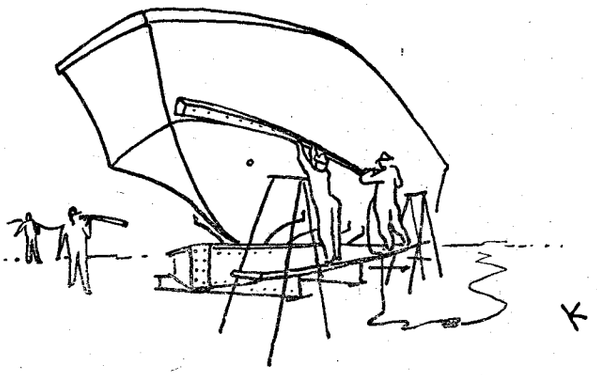
We were in the slop chute as usual. About thirty of us. I guess you think our conversation couldn't be on a very high level, but really we often speak of other things than commissions, free love and nickel beer. I don't know where you prepped, Mr. Forrestal. Did you learn geography at Groton? We got our education the hard way. We know about the terrain on Guadalcanal and the latitude and longitude of the Marianas. We know there are tin mines in Malaya and rubber trees on Java. And we know what they have beside the Bedouin in Saudi-Arabia. We know there aren't Russians on Vancouver Island but that there are a good many US Marines in Korea. The Marines do get about.

At first the talk in the slop chute ran on remedies for frostbite and the probable severity of the Russian winter. Then we talked about the brother of a buddy who was liberated from a German prison camp by Russian troops, and how they gave him vodka, and underwear off their own backs.

You're older than I am, Mr. Forrestal. But I guess they had some of the same things in the school readers in your day. Like the "Charge of the Light Brigade." *Yours not to wonder why, yours but to do and die.*

But times have changed. We *do* wonder. I thought you ought to know.

Respectfully yours,
A UNITED STATES MARINE.



Joseph Konzal.

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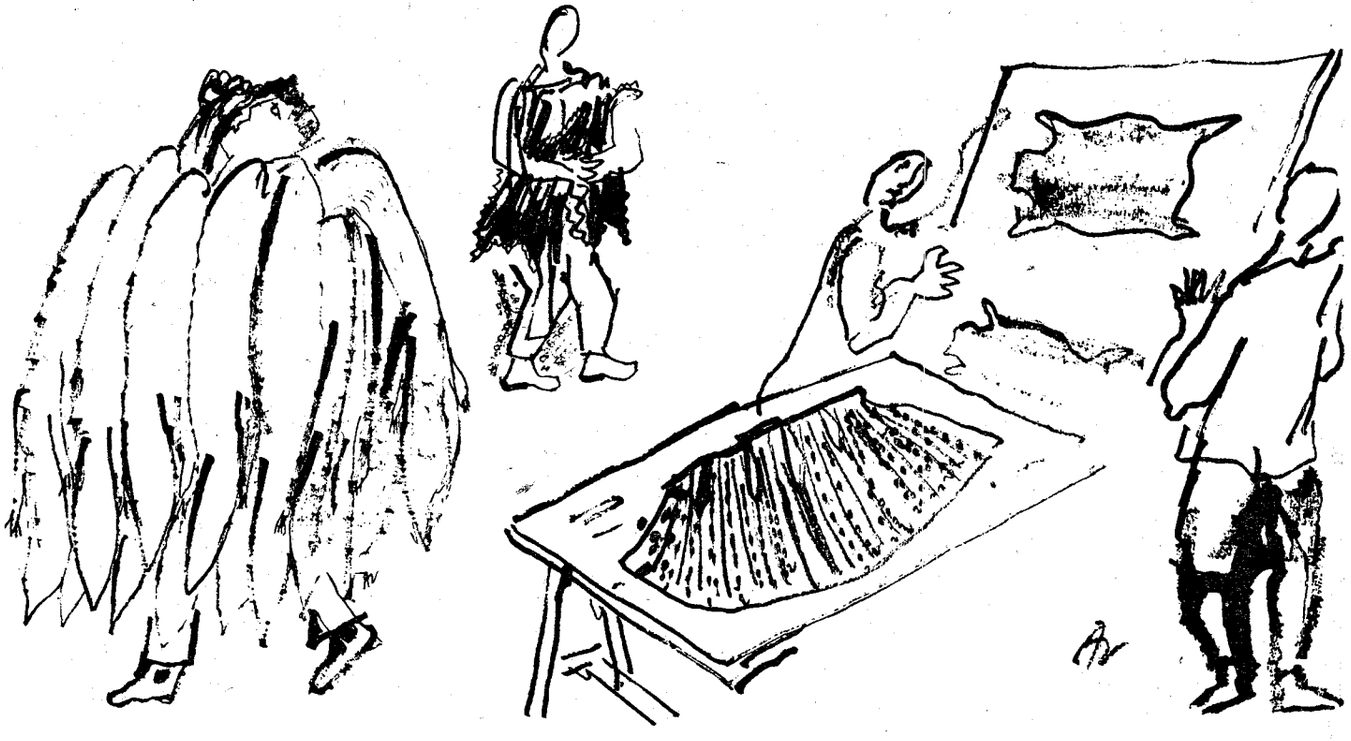
Alfred Zolan, who drew these sketches, writes "At the height of its busy season New York's fur market is filled with trucks, wagons, cartons —crates and bales from Kamchatka, Saskatchewan and the Caucauses . . . tiny shreds of fur float quietly in the sunshine. The pickup boys and floor boys dodge across Seventh Ave. almost completely covered by mounds of arctic or silver fox. . . . The workers are organized in one of the most progressively militant unions, the Fur and Leather Workers-CIO, headed by Ben Gold, a Communist."



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AUSTRIA: The Shadows Deepen

While its people hunger the government waltzes to the tune of "checking the spread of communism."

By BRUNO FREI

Vienna.

IN THE center of Vienna there are still huge piles of rubble and gaping ruins of buildings, giving the once-elegant city still the appearance of a recent battlefield. Austria's food ration of 1,600 calories per person is among the lowest in Europe. Getting a new shoelace is an unimaginably difficult problem. The Austrian *schilling* has lost most of its purchasing power: proof of this are the fantastic prices for food and other essentials on the black market. The new price- and wage-regulations issued last summer by the government were supposed to stimulate production. They have failed utterly of their purpose. The only "productive centers" that are sprouting up like mushrooms are bars, night-clubs and cafes. Apathy has come over the people; they regard any serious effort as senseless. The wage a worker takes home after a hard week's labor is just enough to buy a black-marketeer's breakfast. Merchants and manufacturers are holding back their goods unless they sell them in the black market or send them abroad. The moral disintegration of broad sections of the population has assumed frightening proportions.

There would be no sense in reporting these facts if we did not try to get at the reasons for them—reasons clear to any careful observer, even if they are still obscure to the average Austrian. The latter thinks that he is the victim of a world political struggle which has split the victorious Allies. He feels that the Austrian government's freedom of action is limited and he is inclined to attribute all the troubles he faces to the military occupation. Hence the passivity and apathy, everywhere in evidence, are the psychological result of a political conception, summed up in the propaganda slogan: Austria is freed, but not free.

The government fosters the ideological conflict. It apparently has pinned all its hopes on the sharpening of the struggle between East and West. While many Austrian newspapers speak of the "bridge" which Austria should form in accordance with its geographic position, the government has chosen to make of Austria a bulwark against the East. Chancellor Figl, in a recent speech, declared that we Austrians must take consolation in the fact that we have a "historic mission" to fulfill. This mission is the same one we had 264 years ago, when the Turks stood at the gates of Vienna: that of saving European civilization. In a recently published article Foreign Minister Gruber wrote that Austria has an interest in common with the US, that of "checking the powerful spread of communism." The present leaders of the Social-Democratic Party talk a similar language. Their main concern is lest Austria find a place within the crisis-free economy of the Danube peoples, within the system of the new democracies.

TO STEP up production, Austrian economy needs above all coal and wheat. For centuries it has procured coal from Poland and wheat from Hungary; in exchange, Austria has delivered manufactured goods, wood and important minerals. The Minister for Electric Power (recently resigned) stated he needs 80,000 tons of coal every month this winter to guarantee a supply of electric current. Production of current from sources of water-power is today fifty percent higher than in 1937, but the amount used is twice again as high, so that additional amounts from power-stations will be inadequate if we are to avoid a complete stoppage in industry such as the one that paralyzed our national life last winter. It now appears almost certain that our coal needs will not be filled.

Austria gets only a portion of her needs from Poland. The chief reason for this is that the Austrian manufacturers refuse to ship the necessary manufactured items in exchange for Polish coal deliveries. They do not like the new Poland. The government accepts that as an immutable fact. Some weeks ago the Austrian Food Minister, a Socialist, returned from Hungary where he had gone to negotiate a trade treaty. He officially stated that there was nothing in Hungary for Austria to get. At the very same time a British trade delegation left Hungary with an impressive trade treaty. Hungarian wheat is being shipped to England: Austria has to get its wheat from Argentina.

All this, which seems so senseless, does make sense. It is the Truman Doctrine and an intimation of the Marshall Plan applied to Austria. The United States has announced this country as its strategic frontier. American imperialism would like to let down an iron curtain between Austria and its neighboring states. When in the autumn of 1946 negotiations between the USSR and Austria for the Zisterdorf oil deposits had gone so far that an agreement establishing a mixed corporation with fifty percent Austrian shares was about to be signed, the Austrian negotiators suddenly broke off discussions. Since then we have found out what took place behind the scenes. The Anglo-American oil trusts informed the Austrian government that Washington would back it to the hilt if it in turn took a categorical stand against the Soviet Union. Today the Austrian Foreign Minister has come to the point where he is demanding that his backers keep their promises. In the article mentioned above, Dr. Gruber stated that more than "powerful words" were expected from America.

EVERY afternoon there appears in Vienna a newspaper published by the American occupation forces, the *Wiener Kurier*. This paper was in the forefront of the most recent world

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campaign against democratic Hungary. Its editorial offices concocted all the false reports that were then sent out by the American wire services throughout the world as "special dispatches from Budapest."

Every day the following game goes on: (1) the *Wiener Kurier* publishes some savory bit of sensationalism either against the Soviet Union or one of the democratic nations in Central Europe; (2) the next morning the papers of the two government parties, the Socialists and the Catholic People's Party, repeat it. If Soviet military police arrest a long-sought war criminal, these papers play it up as a "kidnapping in broad daylight." If masked bandits break into a shop, they become "persons unknown," implying soldiers of the Red Army. If there are no potatoes it is not because the peasants refuse to put them on the market or because the association of potato producers has taken them off the market: it is because the Soviet occupation authorities have refused to grant transport permits. If there is no milk for the children, it is not because the night-spots are using milk allotted to the children for whipped cream: it is because the Russians do not give any gasoline for the milk delivery cars. The economic chaos is fostered by the government, but responsibility for it is attributed entirely to the Russians.

The Socialist Minister of the Interior, Helmer, a fanatical opponent of the new democracies in the East, is busy purging the police. But he is not purging the police of Nazis; he is getting rid of tried anti-fascists who were taken into the police apparatus in the first year after liberation during the government of national unity. Dr. Heinz Durmayer, head of the Vienna police, was recently dismissed from his post and replaced by a reactionary. Durmayer is a courageous Austrian patriot who managed to organize illegal resistance to the Nazis even in the German death-camps of Auschwitz and Mathausen.

All this encourages the Nazis. How could it be otherwise? They count on a "Greek" development in Austria. The acquittal of the traitor Guido Schmidt, last Austrian Foreign Minister, was a signal to all the Nazi collaborators to demand rehabilitation. Prominent Nazis have been released from custody, others are being set free, many are getting off with ridiculously mild sentences.

So this is Austria today. It faces the total collapse of its hopes for a withdrawal of the occupation forces and the restoration of its full national independence. The experts' conference on so-called "German assets" met and discussed for months, only to adjourn without any positive results.

Gruber himself has admitted that Austrian trade could easily be balanced if purely commercial transactions with neighboring states, Austria's traditional trade-partners, were possible. Austria's refusal to enter the system of the new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe, with their planned economies and nationalized industries, has meant that the new Central Europe is being built without Austria. Today Prague is bustling with life and is a political and business center for the entire Danube area — as Vienna formerly was.

The progressive elements in Austria, who are watching with anxiety the ruinous influence of present-day American foreign policy, pin their hopes on two factors:

1. The Austrian people, confronting harsh reality, will arouse themselves from the spell of reactionary propaganda. The magnificent example of economic recovery in the nearby new democracies will be a powerful stimulus to this process. The present composition of the Austrian parliament elected in November, 1945, no longer corresponds to popular sentiments. And only now are the war prisoners returning from Soviet Russia. New elections will become necessary. The crux of the matter lies with the Socialist workers, who are showing increasing signs of opposition to the divisive and reactionary policies of the present leadership of the Socialist Party. In elections to factory councils, many Socialist and Communist members of the trade unions have presented joint slates against the will of the Socialist executive. In this connection, too, examples of cooperation and unity in the new democracies cannot fail in the long run to have an effect.

2. The Austrian workers are following with the closest attention the powerful issues now being fought out in the United States. The resistance of the unions to the Taft-Hartley law and the speeches of Henry Wallace fill the hearts of all progressive Austrians with the hope that American foreign policy can be forced to change its course. If there is no more Truman Doctrine, Marshall Plan or similar predatory schemes, then Austria does not have to fear being transformed into an American colony.

The specter of Greece hovers over Europe. . . .

(Translated by John Rossi.)

portside patter

By BILL RICHARDS

General Eisenhower has entered the hospital for a checkup. There are many who think that the poor fellow may be too susceptible to drafts.

•

Taft says that the GOP will draft an anti-inflation program. To date hot air has never been known to check inflation.

•

Many feel that Taft blundered when he said that meat rationing may start in April. Better men have been investigated for less radical statements.

•

Congressman Sundstrom of New Jersey says that the loudest arguments for public housing have come from people with communistic leanings. It's merely a question of raising the roof to lay the foundation.

•

It is predicted that in the near future classrooms will be using movies instead of books. After all, a book does have a tendency to be under cover.

•

The Japanese Finance Minister says that Japan is facing a monetary crisis. It's getting so that the yen is almost as inflated as MacArthur.

•

The Senate has approved payment of Bilbo's funeral expenses. In these uncertain times it is comforting to know that some things are still worth the price.

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review and comment

AMERICAN TRAGEDY

The drama of the James family was performed on a stage darkened by imperialism's shadow.

By SIDNEY FINKELSTEIN

THE JAMES FAMILY, *by F. O. Matthiessen. Knopf. $6.*

"THE JAMES FAMILY" is a study of the collective mind of that family, not stressing the physical details that are generally considered necessary in a biography. The most famous Jameses are of course William, the philosopher and psychologist, and Henry, the novelist. To these two the book adds a rounded portrait of Henry James the father, an interesting section on the sister Alice, and some comment on the ill-fated brothers Wilky and Bob.

The form of the book is different from anything else I know of in American letters. It is made up mainly of the subjects' own words. The letters of all are heavily drawn upon, and in addition there are excerpts from the essays of Henry James, Senior, from the treatises of William James, and from the critical writings of Henry Junior. Yet, although Professor Matthiessen has modestly kept himself in the background, his own comments, cementing the quoted passages together, add up to a full-length treatise. As in Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* Matthiessen has created a profound and moving psychological drama by putting these characters on a stage, letting them play out their parts against each other in their own words, adding a swiftly-sketched touch of background, a stage direction, a needed biographical detail. His selection of material is remarkable in its unfailing taste. His arrangement is similarly a most creative job, bringing out clearly the development of his subjects, and yet breaking chronological order to play them against each other, showing their diverse reactions to the same problem.

And in spite of Matthiessen's modesty a fourth mind emerges from the book: that of the author himself. He is deeply concerned with the problem upon which the Jameses may all be said to have broken. This was the emergence of full-blown industrial capitalism in America after the democratic victory of the Civil War, and directly on its heels the trustification, monopolization and expansionism of imperialism.

My use of the word "broken" may be questioned, but a streak of failure, self-admitted, runs through the lives and work of all of them. The biggest loss is that of Henry James, Senior. The essays reprinted here show him to have been a rare mind, with an independence matching Thoreau and Emerson, and a lustier style than either. He writes almost like a New England Mark Twain. This comment is typical: "Thomas Carlyle is incontestably dead at last, by the acknowledgement of all newspapers. I had, however, the pleasure of an intimate intercourse with him when he was an infinitely deader man than he is now, or ever will be again. . . ." He was a Fourier Socialist and an embattled critic of the hypocritical moral conventions and clerical systems of his time. He was something of a dialectician, in his concept of a God made up of opposites, of unity and diversity, of noble social ideals and realistic social degradation, a God who would be recreated on a new level by a humanitarian society based on brotherhood. Yet he put the cart before the horse, writing book after book to reform the world by expounding his theory of God, instead of seeing that the struggle must take place on the plane of the real world. And so, except for his influence on his sons, he may be said to have wasted himself. His books are only curiosities today.

The sons could not accept the father's system. But they departed from him exactly where he was strong, and this is one of Matthiessen's brilliant insights. William was, of course, a groundbreaker in both psychology and philosophy. He denied, however, not only his father's system, but the possibility of any system. He fought, as unrealistic, the prevalent metaphysical, idealist philosophies, and found himself with a pluralistic concept of the world in which the important fact was always what happened, but in which a man could never understand what was happening. Thus he ruefully found that what he designed as a "democratic" and "realistic" philosophy was easily turned into a justification for all the excesses of capitalist individualism and unchecked exploitation of people. He never solved this contradiction.

The achievement of Henry the novelist is the most lasting. Yet there is no other great novelist except Dickens whose work raises so many unanswered questions. He placed himself at the diametrically opposite social pole from Dickens, writing about the richest of the rich and the most idle of the idle. Matthiessen points out what critics of James should know: that his refusal to treat of basic American social problems and conflicts in their real setting was not due to any disdain for America or for these problems. He simply felt that the task was too big for him; he couldn't understand it, and so couldn't cope with it. Yet he could not forget these problems. They haunt his books like the unquiet dead. He wrote mainly about Europe because he found there a society that had ripened, that had already created its cultural and literary patterns which he could use as stylistic material. But "ripeness" brings to mind "decay," and this also enters his books. He is most Victorian in his snobbery and his list of unmentionable subjects. Yet his works proceed on two levels. The casual reader will find them innocuous and boring. The more perceptive reader will find an uncompromising portrayal of depravity, frustration, cruelty and self-tor-

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ment permeating the leisure class among whom he chose to live.

Matthiessen could have gone more deeply into the actual political and economic background against which the James family played out its tragedy. Like James the novelist, he prefers to suggest, so that only the reader prepared to find will find. But he has seen and stated the problem, and he makes it pretty plain that for all the power of the Jameses, the health of American culture and society rests on the facing of the issues upon which the James family foundered. He has created a classic of American letters, and rubbed some of the gathering tarnish off American university scholarship.

Twisted and Abandoned

RED WINE FIRST, *by Nedra Tyre. Simon & Schuster.* $2.75.

THEY are always wrong, those social statisticians who add up the opinions of the "ordinary" person and track down with a questionnaire what the "average" person has to say. Writers have always been wrong who have gone to the people expecting monosyllables, with a he-said and a she-said.

For the people are always more articulate than one imagines, and think far more profoundly. The simple are not simple-minded, and even the most unsophisticated struggle consciously with the riddle of life and offer insights which pain and joy and poverty have driven into them, sometimes in such moving authentic language that they become poetry.

Such are Nedra Tyre's people in this book, relief clients in three Southern states. Capitalism has put them through the wringer and left them, sucked dry, twisted, abandoned in that cold anteroom to starvation, "on relief"—that mocking term used to describe a state of prolonged dying. They are poor, often illiterate; they are old; and in a kind of summation of their lives they deliver themselves of their opinions and their conclusions to the case worker who takes down their histories. Nedra Tyre has recorded these unofficial case histories with enormous skill and profound sympathy.

"I ain't never wept no tears for myself yet and I don't intend to," one of her women says. "I did feel mighty sorry when maw and Willie died. . . . But I never begrudged a livin' soul death. I kep' on workin' at the mill and it kindly comfirted me to think of maw and Willie underneath the ground by a ol' oak tree, no gettin' up in the mornings for them, no trudgin' all that way to work in the wind and rain, no more tastin' the lint."

When some landlady abuses a thread-peddler, she invites him into her room for a cup of tea because he looks "just like some pore millhand with the foreman bawlin' him out and knowin' he couldn't talk back." As he leaves, he offers her some of the thread he'd been peddling for her kindness. " 'My', I said, 'they're all mighty pretty, kindly hard to make up my mind but I believe I want the red, it's so cheerful.' " And thinking of him after he has gone, she keeps wondering (her own life a misery) "what put that awful hurt look on his face? Could he be layin' now besides some road hungry and tired? What happened to him to make his life nothin' but fear and pain?"

They are full of homely wisdom which their lives had taught them, little true coins they clutched tightly in their fists, unspent. "Folks need folks so bad." "A little livin' thing of any kind is sweet, seemed to me sometimes." Drawing her little abused child to her breast, a woman croons to it, "child, child, don't break yore heart, won't be so many years till you can leave."

Life was so hard for them as children: "Pore, God how pore we was, they wasn't nothin'—and nothin' had no color to it—the land, the house, us chilern's faces, paw and maw—can't remember nothin' but gray. . . ."

Being poor, nevertheless you had some rights. "Reckon a woman has a priviledge to run down her husband if she wants to and hasn't got much else to say." When the relief officials turn her over to a psychiatrist because she wants to marry for the fifth time, she says indignantly, "Look here, doctor, even me and my husbands never discussed such things not even before or after we done them and it looks to me like you got a mighty long nose and a mighty dirty mind to be astin' a perfek stranger such innermate questions." And she was right, too, for she just wasn't happy living alone, and her first four husbands were all well accounted for, and none of them had ever complained.

A list of the chapter headings gives some further hint of what the book is like: "I Got to Talk to Somebody," "Honey Are You Saved?" "I Had to Jack Myself Up," "Courage to Endure," "We Written the Guvner," "Truckin' Is a Good Line of Work," "They Shouldn't Have Hung Willie," "You Feel Such a Fool of a Man," "Take a Message, Virgin Mary" and "A Contented Man."

No, they are not "hillbillies." Hollywood never met them. They are people in the struggle to survive. "Red wine first, Jessie," the character in Sean O'Casey's play says, "to the passion and the power and the pain of life; and then a drink of white wine to the melody that is in them all."

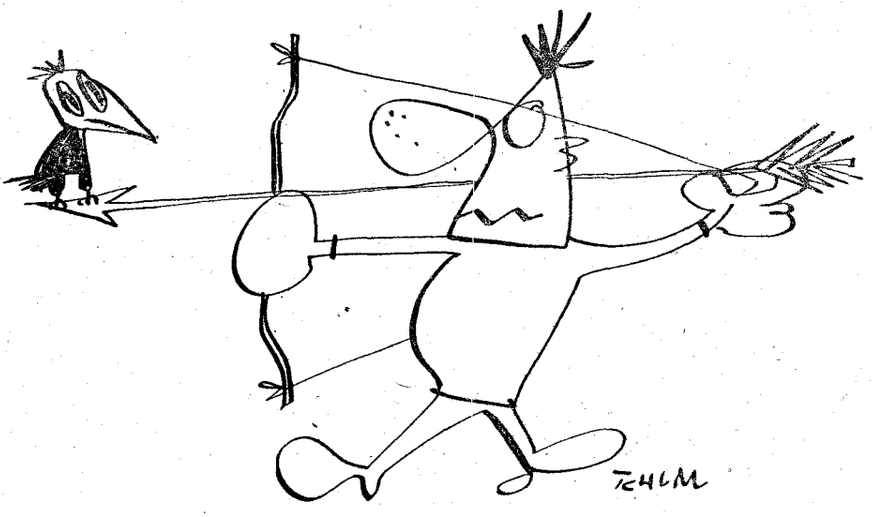
There is passion and power in these tales, and melody, too.

PHILLIP BONOSKY.

Blood on the Tapestry

CHINA AWAKE, *by Robert Payne. Dodd, Mead.* $4.

THIS is the ninth book on Asia to be written by the incredibly prolific thirty-six-year-old Robert Payne. It is a journal of his days in Kunming,



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where he taught in the university, late in 1944 and early in 1945, and of his travels to the North. It is filled with the sensuous response of a poet to the sights, sounds and action of Great China. Sometimes his sensitivity is so acute that it must be put down to the illness that Payne suffered even while he was teaching. Yet, recording the dirt and the glory, the special quality of Chinese life, the good humor of its common people, the high aspirations of China's great scholars, Payne brings deep sympathy and understanding to his record.

Especially in the final section of his journal, which deals with the liberated areas, do the people come to a vivid life of their own. They step whole and living from the pages. Such is their impact that they alone emerge from the tapestried background of Payne's journals as more than memorable—as unforgettable. In the background there remain the slender red-cheeked Chinese girls, the blue-gowned students, the lake scenes delicate as pastels, the old professors with their sparse beards.

Likewise the heroism that is a commonplace in China today comes through unforgettably in the earlier pages — the sections dealing with Payne's university life. It is whispered to Payne that a certain professor is "a member of the Democratic League," and therefore suspect — because the aims of the league, whose members are being jailed, are peace, an end to the Kuomintang dictatorship and a coalition government.

The students squat on their heels in the university courtyard, unmoving, as Kuomintang bullets whine overhead. The professor-speakers continue to address them from the floodlighted platforms, aloof to the lead slugs slamming into the plastered wall behind them. The death of four student leaders becomes the occasion of a great ceremonial burial in which a mile-long procession of students, professors and townspeople participate. It is little wonder that a student tells Payne, when they are discussing the title for his China journals: "You must call it 'China Awake,' because the students—and all China—*are* awake today, and they will never sleep again."

Payne mourns with the Chinese people for those who died only half-aware that they were martyrs to freedom. But one gains the impression that he himself, even after the years he spent in China, is but half-conscious of what is involved there. He seeks peace, and finds it only in the North, among the Communists. But though he qualifies as an "old China hand" he can still ask the leaders in the liberated areas when the war will end, as though that rested with them. And he seems to be amazed when they give him their answers—that the war will end "when China has democracy and a coalition government."

It is to be regretted that Payne's search for legends of past struggles prevented him from studying present developments. Those who hunger for news from Tartary that will enlighten and unify China's continuing struggle for democracy should supplement their reading of Payne's book with Israel Epstein's *The Unfinished Revolution in China*. Epstein's Marxist view of Chinese history and intimate knowledge of Chinese events will supply what the Payne tapestry—vivid, colorful and China-packed as it is—does not give.

RALPH IZARD.

In Brief

THE UNITED STATES AND RUSSIA, *by Vera Micheles Dean. Harvard.* $3. It is refreshing to find a book on American-Soviet relations which, even though limited by certain misconceptions, is motivated by the conviction that "the war that should be inevitable is not the war on the field of battle, but the war against hunger, disease, illiteracy, poverty and fear. In this war there are no frontiers, and there should be no ideological differences. In this war the United States and Russia can fight side by side as peacetime allies." In addition to much valuable information in her book, Mrs. Dean has appended useful tables on Russo-American trade and an informal bibliography.

YOUR NEWSPAPER: BLUEPRINT FOR A BETTER PRESS, *by Nine Nieman Fellows. Macmillan.* $2.75. A lively critical examination of our wayward press by newspapermen and women, under the auspices of the Nieman Foundation at Harvard. It notes the trend toward uniformity of class interest and expression which has resulted from the concentration of control. The faith expressed that this trend can be reversed is not so well documented as the analysis of the situation as it exists today. For good reasons. Apart from this, *Your Newspaper* is a good sister volume to A. J. Liebling's collection of *New Yorker* pieces on the same subject.

SELECTED POEMS OF FEDERICO GARCIA LORCA, *translated by Stephen Spender and J. L. Gili. Transatlantic Arts.* $1.25. An American edition of the poems of Lorca translated in 1938 for the Hogarth Press, London. It includes some of the best known and most beautiful of Lorca's poetry: the

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"Ode to Walt Whitman," "Lament for Ignacio Sanchez Mejias," "Ballad of the Little Square" and excerpts from "Yerma."

OUTLINE OF ANTHROPOLOGY, *by Melville Jacobs and Bernhard Stern. Barnes & Noble.* $1.25. Apart from the highly technical series of essays in Boas' *General Anthropology*, there has not been available heretofore a good detailed survey of the field in one volume for the layman. Here is such a work, a clear concise summary of the subject, embracing questions of human evolution, cultural anthropology and language. Appended to each chapter are splendidly selected reading lists, and there is a valuable glossary of those terms used so casually by the anthropologist but so esoteric to the layman. The authors' approach to their material is progressive throughout. They have made extensive use of their experience as field workers among the Indians of the Pacific Northwest Coast. It is regrettable that there are no charts and illustrations for the chapters on evolution, prehistory and art, and that there could not have been more concrete examples given for the theoretical points that are made. But these are limitations imposed by the nature of the volume as a college outline. There is still no better introduction to the subject than this.

FREUD: HIS LIFE AND HIS MIND, *by Helen Walher Puner. Howell, Soskin.* $4. DOCTOR FREUD: AN ANALYSIS AND A WARNING, *by Emil Ludwig. Hellman, Williams.* $3. A need has long been felt for a definitive biography of one of the great scientists of our age. Neither Puner nor Ludwig fills this need. Both books are written with malice and ill-will, and in both the biographical material is patched together from Freud's own writings and adds nothing to what he has told us of himself. It is shocking to find Ludwig reviving all the stale slanders of the early 1900's and raising the old cry of pan-sexualism. Miss Puner criticizes her subject for his failure to find a "soul." Freud on Freud is still the best source.

THEATER

ON ITS second night, when I saw *A Streetcar Named Desire*, standees deep behind the orchestra rows provided the material evidence that I was at a new hit. In the exhilaration of the audience before the curtain rise and in the intermissions, there was a special note, a consciousness of being present at an "event." The drama that followed on the stage justified the excitement. Tennessee Williams' new play *is* an event in the American theater.

Seldom have superb playwriting, superb direction and superb acting been so worthy of each other. The production is renewed proof that, given the challenge of a first-rate script and sensitive direction like Elia Kazan's, so sure-handed in the use of theater resources, acting can rise well above its own previous peaks. Marlon Brando as Stanley Kowalski and, above all, Jessica Tandy as Blanche du Bois will stay a long time in the memory of theatergoers.

Comment has been made on the sheer volume of Miss Tandy's role. She is on the stage, speaking and in motion, virtually all through a play that goes on half an hour or more beyond the customary length. But what is more significant, making the achievement so much more a feat, is that Miss Tandy plays, in effect, a double role. Blanche du Bois is a woman who lives in two worlds, not in the old, melodramatic conspiratorial sense of a "double life" but in the tragic and all-too-real sense of a frustrated life functioning almost simultaneously in a real world and in a compensating world of fantasy. We see her at a point where the two worlds begin to touch; and we see her slipping from one into the other until a return to the real world becomes impossible.

She has fallen from the Southern heights of gentility by the loss of that necessary prop, a family mansion and inheritance. Her youth is also past and with it has gone the confidence of beauty. Love has gone, too, in the shocks of a disastrous marriage. In her world of fantasy Blanche seeks recovery of what she has lost in a dream of a man of riches whose wealth, spread like a salve, will heal everything; whose leisured culture will make him appreciative of her mellowed charms that more than replace her vanished youth. A telegram somehow never sent, a telephone call somehow never made, will summon him and he will come sailing in on a white yacht.

For release in the real world she must resort to drink, the misty corridor to her world of fantasy; to hot baths taken "for her nerves," in which she returns to infantile coziness; and to sexual promiscuity that will never keep its promises of "love." Drink and promiscuity have made her too notorious to be kept in her teaching job, or to be tolerated in prim little towns. Her last refuge is her sister's slum home in New Orleans.

She makes her appearance there like a dismayed princess. She deposits herself there with her trunkload of old

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finery and her addled head full of doomed pretenses. She attempts to re-establish an old ascendancy over her sister, who is tingling with the still-new raptures of marriage and armed with the new composure of coming motherhood. She fails, but in the attempt she incurs the enmity of her brother-in-law, who keeps confronting her with reality until the real world becomes unlivable to her.

The events through which this tragedy of a breaking mind is developed are simple. The scenes are like stages of a journey or, better, like the unplotted sequences of life itself. For Williams does not use the concentration of the plotted play; he prefers a flexibility and variety to be found more often in the novel than on the stage. The play proceeds not to a crisis in which all questions are resolved but by a continuous deepening of character and situation. It is done with such broad sympathy, as well as penetrating insight, that in its carefully individualized lives all life is felt. And it is so sensitive that its lines, though never stretched out of character, often attain the poignancy of poetry.

The chief defect in the play is the vagueness over the beginnings of Blanche's trouble and the quality of her relations with her sister. The haze over the mind of poor Blanche need not have been stretched over the mind of the audience.

The work of a creative and courageous mind inevitably makes social comment. It is there in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, in the dinginess of the Kowalski slum flat; in its slim margin of habitable living, in the growing brutalization of young Kowalski, in the contradictions in Blanche's pathetic dream where spiritual values are to spring from fertilizing showers of money.

More profound still is the comment implied in the form taken by Blanche's tragedy—the destruction of a mind. Capitalist civilization, which has developed mechanical techniques and retarded the social techniques necessary to control them, has lessened physical risks, as the rising longevity levels have shown, but has enormously multiplied mental risks—as our mounting psychiatric records show.

These are some conclusions that may be drawn from the play. Let it be noted that none are explicit, or urged upon the audience. Whoever witnesses *A Streetcar Named Desire* is certain

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of a strong and revealing emotional experience from which he can draw much. ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

MUSIC

ELIE SIEGMEISTER's First Symphony, recently introduced by Leopold Stokowski and the New York Philharmonic, was both a pleasure and disappointment. It is a brave attempt to write a monumental work employing the American folk themes that this composer has done so much to popularize. I hesitate to criticize it because it embodies much that must be supported in American music: the search for human character in melody, for positive emotions and epic conceptions. However, if a composer wants to say something different from the *academician, his music must sound* different. There were many moving sections in Siegmeister's symphony, but there were also many in which he seemed to use methods taken from the romantic national composers without making them wholly his own. As a start in this most exacting of musical forms, the symphony has much that is admirable. I hope that these times, which are so difficult for the composer trying to write honest music and still make a living, permit him to build upon it.

Samuel Barber's Concerto for Cello and Orchestra, performed by Raya Garbousova with Mitropoulos conducting, was at the opposite extreme from the Siegmeister work. It was entrancing in style, thin in conception. The orchestral sounds throughout were fine in their delicate, shifting colors, bolstered by a subtle, economical use of modern harmony. The melodies were weak, however, even frivolous, and structural ideas of any breadth were absent, with a cadenza apparently being thrown in whenever a movement seemed to sag.

Ernst Krenek's Fourth Symphony, also introduced by Mitropoulos, was described by the Austrian composer as a struggle between "ideals" and harsh "realities." I doubt whether valid works of art can be constructed about such abstract philosophies. Rather the philosophies are implicit in the composer's dealings with more concrete or personal experiences. The work had many beautiful passages of atonal polyphony, which is perhaps the most sensuous music being written today, but its all-over structure, while

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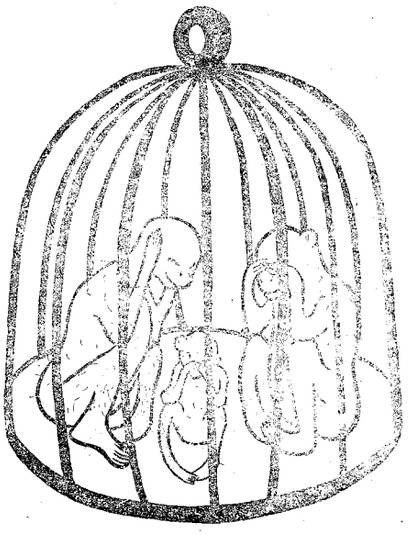
built by an expert hand, failed to be convincing.

ON RECORDS: One of the most strange and beautiful of modern American works is "Lousadzak," a concerto for piano, strings and percussion, by Alan Hovhaness. This composer goes for his material and style back to Armenian and Far Eastern folk music and Byzantine polyphony. The varied sounds he gets from the instruments are amazing, the melodies are sprightly and languorous, the textures are always fascinating. The method of constructing the music, a free expansion and variation of germ phrases, may bewilder people accustomed only to diatonic music, but will sound familiar to those acquainted with the works of, for example, Bela Bartok, or the free improvisations of hot jazz. My feeling about this music, however, is that it is a little too "pure," too completely settled in the past. It is a healthy approach to question bourgeois civilization, in music as well as economics, but it is one-sided not to make some use of the knowledge and sensibility this civilization has brought to the world. This concerto, and the "Evening Song" included in the album, are recommended to anyone interested in fine contemporary music. But I am afraid that when the novelty wears off the music will seem a little thin, though still fresh and fine. The performance of the concerto is by Maro Ajemian, with the composer conducting (Disc 876).

Columbia's reissues of Hot Jazz Classics offer a second volume of Bessie Smith (C 142) and a volume of "Bix and Tram" (C 144), both very worth your while. The songs Bessie sings are not the basic blues, but popular songs tinged by blue phrases, to which she gives the magnificent dramatization and projection of a personality that make every performance unforgettable. The tunes of the Bix album are Dixieland favorites, and pop tunes of the Twenties, with more than a little ensemble corn. But Biederbecke's melodic genius and perfect taste always gives the proper lift. Another fine Bix reissue is the single record of "Jazz Me Blues" and "At the Jazz Band Ball."

"Hebrew Liturgy" offers authentic and moving versions of six modern synagogue chants, by Cantor Berele Chagy (Stinson 614).

SIDNEY FINKELSTEIN.



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